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ABSTRACT

A survey of Unesco National Commissions in 29 countries was conducted to identify and compare the administrative procedures implemented in the field of adult education, as well as the legislative measures adopted by governments to promote adults' right to education. The survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire sent to Unesco National Commissions, a review of legal documents, and analyses of comparative studies and monographs on individual countries. Results were reported in terms of the universalization of adult education, the social extension of the right to education, the right to education in all fields, the administration of the adult education system, and adult education teachers and research. The study concluded that there is a tendency for a growing number of countries to enact laws concerning adult education. Although at one time and in some countries these provisions reflected state welfare policies, today adult education is required by law to accompany and even precede major economic and social changes. The achievement of such objectives is seen to depend on two basic hypotheses that are becoming reality: (1) the recognition of the right of all individuals, especially workers, to devote part of each day to study; and (2) the creation of an adult education system that guarantees the right of education to all, at any age, from the lowest to the highest levels. (110 references) (KC)

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ADULT EDUCATION:
LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

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INTRODUCTION

The present survey was carried out on behalf of the Unesco Division of Primary Education, Literacy, Adult Education and Education in Rural Areas, in compliance with a recommendation adopted by the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education held in March 1985.

The aim of the survey is to identify the administrative procedures implemented by institutions in the field of adult education. At the same time, the survey will consider the legislative measures adopted by governments to promote adults' right to education. It is not, therefore, intended as an inventory of the provisions currently in force in different countries but should be seen as an attempt to explain different approaches to finding a solution to the main problems involved in establishing an adult education system, whether public or private.

The survey was conducted by means of:

(a) a questionnaire sent out to Unesco National Commissions, which replied using information provided by the national education authorities;

(b) a review of a series of legal documents;

(c) analyses of existing comparative studies, especially an analysis by the European Bureau of Adult Education, and of monographs on individual countries, including those commissioned by ECLE and those published in specialized reviews.

This study is a summary of a more extensive and detailed report. It deals only with the main categories of legislative measures. Examples of individual countries are limited to those where the explanation of a legal tendency may be simplified. It makes no claim to being exhaustive: only a limited number of national policies have been examined, and only a limited number of national provisions, by comparison with the many laws it would have been necessary to review for a complete analysis of each individual country. The field of legislation involving adult education issues is much more extensive than the few legal texts which explicitly refer to the subject.

Several countries show a tendency towards a non-explicit definition of the role and educational functions which are in practice conferred on the various social actors. In Italy, for example, a survey of the entire legislative output of Parliament between 1970 and 1985 revealed that approximately 1,000 laws were enacted containing provisions relating in one way or another to adult education.(25) This suggests that the scope of adult education legislation is much more extensive than previously thought. The social regulation of the educational procedures initiated by such legislation in different countries thus takes on unexpected importance.

The Unesco National Commissions which participated in the survey include: Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Kuwait, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Syria, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland and Venezuela.

1. UNIVERSALIZATION OF ADULT EDUCATION

1.1 Definition of the social groups concerned

The main objective of legislation concerning adult education is that it should initiate a process aimed at the extension of the right to education to all levels of society.

Three differing institutional strategies may be identified in terms of the social groups targeted. The first strategy considers the target group as all the potential beneficiaries of the services to be provided. Here 'continuing education is not a right, it is considered a social service for which most individuals can and ought to pay' (45, p. 46).

The second strategy considers the target population as being composed of marginalized groups in need of assistance. It is typically aimed at definite social categories (the unemployed, etc.), at specific fields of study or at vocational retraining requirements (86, p. 22).

The third approach encompasses the entire range of the new public interested in adult education, and relates the opportunities offered to the educational and structural situation of this public. Adult education is seen as a collective right.

1.2 Adulthood as a time for education

1.2.1 Extensions of adulthood

In legal terms, the question of when adulthood begins is closely related to the specific situation of individual countries. The general tendency is to lower the onset of adulthood to 18 years of age. Depending on prevailing conditions in different countries this approach reflects the desire to pre-empt the drop-out problem, the need to anticipate the integration of adolescents into adult life and, the extent of the malaise which affects young people.

In countries where legislators are confronted with deeply-rooted historical traditions, the actual recognition of the right to adult education is based on the definition of priority age-groups associated with specific conditions of education.

Concern for the educational problems of the elderly has been a feature of legislation in recent decades. Of all the industrialized nations, the example of the United States of America appears one of the most interesting in terms of legislative provision. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 lays down the principle of the equality of the older citizen in respect of educational and cultural facilities; preclusive provisions must be abolished. The Act also makes it possible to delay retirement and extend the span of active employment, interspersed with regular sessions of 'post-retirement vocational education'.

1.2.2 The resumption of studies

Legislative measures on the resumption of studies fall into three different categories, according to whether they refer to: lifelong education, the transition to adulthood and adulthood itself.

(a) With regard to measures concerning lifelong education, the main reference here is to the recommendation by Schwartz that all individuals

be allocated 'an educational credit' from birth as a 'lifelong educational entitlement', to quote a theory advanced in the United States in the mid-1970s (35, p. 32).

(b) In some instances the measures concerning young adults are intended to free them from the continuing burden of an inadequate level of instruction. 'Barriers' are set in place - in the form of positive study opportunities - to coincide with milestones in the life of a young man - national service, search for employment, marriage, etc.

(c) Measures concerning adults are categorized according to whether they qualify as incentives or obligations. The first step in providing any form of incentive is the recognition of the right of access to higher education after a specified age has been reached. Another kind of incentive is provided by the level of qualifications already acquired and their attendant advantages - for example preference in the granting of bank loans, promotion at work, bonus holidays, facilities for the purchase of machinery, etc.

1.2.3 Obligations with regard to age

Legislative measures aimed at making adult education compulsory can be categorized according to the various agents subject to such obligations: the State, firms and individuals. These measures are embodied mainly in legislation which is intended to promote a rapid, universal improvement of the low standards of education of the population belonging to several specific age-groups. The most striking examples are the regulations adopted in Iraq - with the 1978 law No. 92, and in Syria, with its 1972 law No. 7 with a view to ensuring the success of 'general compulsory campaigns'. Compulsory education provides for:

(a) all individuals included in specific age-groups;

(b) regular participation in educational activities;

(c) the genuine completion of studies.

Sanctions include the imposition of fines, imprisonment, the withdrawal of the right to State employment, to receive any form of allowance, including wage increases, to be granted bank loans or to take out patents (5, p. 425). Moreover, those who, on completion of their course, have not reached a satisfactory level of competence, are required to continue their studies for a period of time determined by the teaching staff.

2. THE SOCIAL EXTENSION OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

As stated in the introduction to the Norwegian Adult Education Act of 1976, 'a re-distribution of the educational resources must be the goal, so that people can utilize them in all phases of life. Furthermore, such resources must be available in forms, at times and in places which are in the best interest of the people themselves' (64, p. 6).

Despite wide-ranging contradictions, the above-mentioned Act is characterized by a gradual recognition of the educational problems peculiar to a newly-emerging public. Some of the measures adopted are aimed at the removal of obstacles to the participation of specific social groups in adult education schemes.

2.2 Workers' right to education

2.2.1 The recognition of the importance of work experience

Legislation deals with the above question in two different but complementary ways. In the first instance, there is a growing tendency towards recognizing the importance of work experience for purposes of admission to higher levels of the education system, despite the absence of a school certificate, a qualification required of younger students. Secondly, recognition of the educational role of work experience entails a reappraisal of the active educational potential of work and the relations of the worker with the means of production, the work environment, work tempo, etc.

2.2.2 Paid educational leave

The main features of the introduction of paid educational leave (PEL) are:

(i) The rejection of any kind of standardization. Some Swiss corporations, for example, despite their promotion of a national campaign to launch a 'Bildungsoffensive' or 'culture drive' (cf. Basler Zeitung, 7 January 1989) consider that 'a universal right to PEL must be rejected, since continuing education, requiring release from work, can only be determined on an individual basis' (96, p. 21).

(ii) The decision-making role of the individual firms concerned. In countries such as Yugoslavia, where this practice is verifiable in the work place 'internal regulations deal with such benefits as educational leave, daily allowance expenses, travel and shortened working hours' (22, p. 9).

(iii) Some countries endorse the practice of entrusting decisions concerning the various categories of workers to agreements ratified by trade union contracts, in view of the opportunity thus afforded to adapt procedures to conditions in the firm and to the specific educational needs of individual production sectors.

(iv) The legal definition of the rules governing the behaviour and duties of workers, firms and the State comes closest to the guidelines established by ILO in this field. The wide range of measures provided for by legislation in different countries is so complex that a detailed analysis is required of the provisions concerning the major problems arising in connection with PEL.

(a) Social groups concerned

The PEL is also available for social groups other than salaried workers. For example, legislation passed by the Bremen Land provides for the extension of the right to adult education to the unemployed and housewives (96, p. 11). Apart from these extensions, the PEL system consists of measures dealing mainly with the participation of salaried workers.

There are very few countries where the right to adult education is recognized as extending to all categories of the work force. In most cases, there is a tendency to establish guidelines according to which the groups entitled to benefit from such schemes are clearly defined. These guidelines may be summarized as follows:

a.1 the completion of a minimum period of employment in a given job, although there have been cases where young workers and apprentices are given priority;

a.2 the absence of a satisfactory level of education;

a.3 the category of work situation. Frequently the right of access to education is recognized only in the case of workers employed full-time. In other instances, this right has been extended to include part-time workers, often women or young people;

a.4 the work sector. In some countries special measures have been adopted to promote the extension of PEL to workers in agriculture, in small firms, and in depressed sectors of production;

a.5 membership of a trade union organization. In New Zealand, for example, the law makes PEL available to trade unions but not to individuals (40, p. 15).

(b) Duration of PEL

Release from work for the period required to complete a set course of studies, regardless of other factors, occurs only in a limited number of cases. More frequently workers are entitled to a fixed number of days per year of employment. In some countries a standard number of days or hours is fixed by law.

In certain countries PEL is seen not only as a worker's right but also as an obligation to be fulfilled at regular intervals, e.g. in the USSR, where 'the trade union organizations see to it that deadlines for raising qualifications are not exceeded and that workers undergo further training not less than once every five years' (106, p. 66).

(c) Methods of payment

There are only a few countries where legal provision is made for the maintenance of the right to continue receiving one's salary in full. The criteria normally applied to establish an appropriate contribution, in cases where there is a possibility that costs may be partially covered, are both quantitative and qualitative. In the first instance, a maximum number of hours from which the worker may benefit is determined - in some cases this number is less than the duration of the course - or a ceiling is established to limit the maximum number of hours without loss of pay, regardless of the wages earned. In Italy, for example, a firm will recognize a worker's entitlement to 150 hours without loss of pay, provided the worker is attending a course which lasts for at least 300 hours. Wage coverage is thus reduced to 50 per cent. Legal measures adopted in Belgium stipulate the maximum sum which can be paid, and update it annually.

As a rule, criteria relating to qualitative factors are concerned with the type of course attended and reimbursement entitlement is established accordingly. Another method of reimbursement involves the payment of individual 'study support' which is unrelated to the salary received. An example of this is found in Finland, where 'during employment training, the trainee can receive study support that consists of a basic sum, plus a sum depending on his former salary. Study support is taxable income. In addition to study support, those participating in employment training receive reimbursement for travel and room and board expenses' (79, p. 11).

(d) Fields of study

Recognition of entitlement to PEL, related to the overall educational problems of workers, is still too limited. There seems to be a tendency towards solutions of a partial nature which recognize the validity of a limited number of studies, all of which are related to the development of new production capacities, to the raising of educational levels and an increase in trade union training.

(e) Methods of implementation

In many cases the legal acquisition of the right to education has not automatically led to its effective recognition, thereby giving rise to the problem of introducing measures aimed at increasing the possibilities of access to PEL. The main difficulties concern the protection of workers, the limitation of possible opposition from firms, and the role of the State.

With regard to the first of these points, different measures have been introduced on an experimental basis, aimed at three main objectives:

(i) to allow trade union and worker organizations the right to manage and organize access to PEL for interested workers;

(ii) to ensure the protection of the worker's right to education against a background of possible dissuasive measures adopted by firms;

(iii) the creation of incentives and inducements to encourage workers to continue their education.

Concerning the limitation of possible opposition from employers, legislation passed in many countries of Western Europe prohibits firms from refusing access to PEL provided that it does not exceed a number of days' absence which is compatible with the operation of the firm.

However, firms have the right to delay the start of study leave. It should be pointed out that, in most cases, measures are laid down by law but do not provide appropriate sanctions in the case of non-compliance.

Other crucial points in PEL legislation concern methods of study, the bodies authorized to organize training courses, methods of financing and the management of the funds concerned.

2.3 The educational rights of specific groups

National legislation in different countries refers increasingly and in greater detail to the educational problems of specific groups of society, defined according to social and material conditions and ethnic origin. In many countries, the educational problems of women, immigrants, ethnic minorities, the unemployed, ex-service men, prisoners and the disabled have called for special legislative measures. Depending on their main fundamental objective, measures aimed at establishing the educational rights of specific social groups may be classified on the basis of their concern for (a) equality of opportunity of access to education (this category usually concerns women, minorities, immigrants and refugees); compensation for those whose education has suffered through war service; the adaptation of education facilities and content in order to cater for the disabled; and the reintegration of prisoners, for example, into the life and productive work of the community.

The question of the equality of the educational rights of women appears in the legislation of many countries. Measures may be classified on the basis of their concern with:

(a) the provision of a universal system of guarantees making continuing education possible. In the GDR, for example, 'for the training of women workers as skilled workers or women supervisors, special contents of contract have been laid down. These include: additional paid release from work; guaranteeing the completion of education also in case of illness, pregnancy and illness of the child, by special measures; possibility of carrying out the education during working hours entirely' (95, p. 8);

(b) specialized facilities to encourage education ('sex equity resources centre', 'daycare centre', etc.);

(c) special programmes or projects: in Indonesia, for example, for the promotion of women's associations (95, p. 2), or projects designed to solve the educational problems of specific groups of women.

The growing influx of immigrants is reflected even in the legislation passed in some countries. The tendency to enact measures aimed at ensuring equal educational opportunities is illustrated by experience in Sweden and the U.S.A. In Sweden, the most significant measures concern the legal recognition, in the case of immigrants, of the 'right to paid leave of absence to be able to participate for up to 240 hours in courses in Swedish (...). Whole immigrant families as well as individual immigrants take part in these courses' (22, 3/3). However, the requirement to recognize these rights has acted as a disincentive for firms to hire immigrant labour, thereby necessitating amendments to the law. In the U.S.A., adult immigrants are explicitly covered by the Adult Education Act, with the 1978 Amendment. Rather than impose legally binding measures, this Act provided for the possibility of introducing 'special programs'. In 1980 the Refugee Education Assistance Act was passed, aimed not only at refugees, classified according to the country of origin, but also at immigrants. This law allocated funds for:

'(1) programs of instruction (...) in basic reading and mathematics, (...) aid for the promotion of literacy among such refugees;

(2) administrative costs of planning and operating (...);

(3) educational support service (...), with regard to educational, career and employment opportunities; and

(4) special projects (...) to develop occupational and related skills for individuals' (Sec. 402).

2.4 Providing adequate facilities

The universalization of the right to education calls for a positive solution to the inequalities in the distribution of educational and cultural facilities which exist between town and country, and between town-dwellers and the populations who live on the periphery of towns.

This section of the survey will examine legislative measures in favour of an equitable allocation of educational and cultural resources between the inhabitants of different parts of the country. Most of them can be classified according to their objectives, whether it be:

(a) the application of new criteria in the planning and construction of residential and industrial centres. In China, for example, 'the State also stipulates that ever since 1981, district building in the urban area and the construction of new factories must take the planning of infrastructure for adult education into account, and it should be listed as an item of investment in the capital construction' (95, p.5);

(b) the development of educational activities, the promotion of measures aimed at conducting special projects for particularly deprived areas, or the definition of criteria for the distribution of educational and cultural resources which encourage the utilization in such areas of existing educational and cultural facilities.

2.5 Individual costs

The possibility of defraying the costs incurred by participation in adult education activities is a contributing factor in educational selection. This very real problem is dealt with differently by various legislative systems, with provision varying from courses which are entirely free of charge to those which must be paid in full.

In some countries, legislation requires that adult education be available free of charge. However, this often refers only to registration and tuition fees.

Additional expenses - books, travel, etc., in cases where participants are not expected to bear such costs - are borne by the State or the employer.

Amendments have been introduced, however, in countries where the rule is that 'financial self-support' forms the basis of such activities. Their aim is to minimize selectivity generated by high costs. Criteria for the implementation of these amendments are based on the educational levels of participants and can result in exemption from payment, at least for certain levels and types of formal education.

It is chiefly in countries where adult education is borne by the individual, and participants also have to bear the cost of registration fees, that legislation provides for the possibility of allocating study support in individual cases. As a rule, this kind of allowance is granted subject to an assessment of applicants' needs.

Depending on educational levels, employment situation, age and the kind of study envisaged, adult education grants may cover several items of expenditure - loss of earnings, registration fees, board and lodging, educational materials, etc.

3. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN ALL FIELDS

3.1 A preliminary classification of legislative measures

Having reviewed the legislative provision made in support of the right to adult education, it is possible to identify five different situations:

(a) the absence of any legislation for adult education;

(b) the indirect and fragmentary nature of references to rights concerning adult education within the framework of measures covering various aspects of life - work, health, societal life, etc.);

(c) the existence of federal, state and/or regional legislation, of a fundamentally insufficient nature, confined to certain specific fields of adult education, usually with the lowest levels of instruction, such as vocational training, limited forms of 'social advancement' or of the organization of leisure;

(d) the existence at national level of an outline law on adult education aimed at regrouping various fields of education and providing for the possibility of applying educational rights to the wide range of problems concerned with adult education;

(e) the existence of legislation aimed at setting in motion processes for the reform of the education system as a whole in the context of lifelong education. In such cases, the legal instrument applied is a general law on education. This gives educational cohesion to the whole range of educational processes and consolidates educational and cultural systems in general.

3.2 The distribution of educational resources

At present, the extension of education to include adults has led to action in three main directions. The first can be described as a vertical movement, aimed at extending educational opportunities for adults from the lowest to the highest levels. The second movement is horizontal in the sense that, starting from a nucleus of subjects, it aims at recognizing the right of adults to complete education in all fields. The third movement is aimed at developing a real synergy between study and work.

There is a growing tendency amongst legislators to consider all cultural facilities as tools to promote adult education. In the Republic of Korea, legislation stipulates that 'library, museum, community centres and other public cultural facilities should be utilized for the wide range of adult/non-formal education' (95, p. 3). Sweden and Denmark have tended to promote reforms in adult education alongside reforms in cultural facilities, thereby creating a comprehensive system, with no divisions or barriers between one subsystem and another, not only in the case of facilities traditionally reserved for education but also with regard to new resources.

In most countries there is no explicit legal provision for the role of the mass media in adult education. In these instances, their function may be defined without reference to any specific links with the formal education system. In cases where legislation exists, two main tendencies emerge, aimed at:

(a) the promotion and standardization of distance teaching: the use of the latest media, the relationship between public and private involvement, the quality of private services, etc.;

(b) attuning the role of the media as a whole to the promotion of education. In this context, note should be made of the objective expressed in the Avant-projet du rapport du sixième Congrès of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale 'to mobilize the mass media (...) by rationalizing light entertainment programmes which should serve to support the education system' (67, p.73).

3.2.1 Continuing education to the highest levels

The extension of the right to education to the highest levels of scientific specialization involves not only the academic field but also vocational training and contact with cultural facilities.

With regard to formal education in particular, existing legislation is characterized by a certain momentum which, at varying speeds in different countries, recognizes the possibility of continuing education to the highest levels. Access to university education for adult students is organized in many different ways, the four principal examples of which are listed below:

(a) legislation is limited to the provision of alternative forms of education, which in fact keep adult students outside the university context. The premises are those of the university, as is the teaching staff, but their use is limited by law to forms of 'university extension' or 'continuing education';

(b) legal measures deal with 'only the alternative courses and post-work education' (64, p.19);

(c) the admission of adult students is not accompanied by any significant changes in the university system. The adult student must be able to adapt to the requirements of university studies.

(d) there is a trend towards university reform, with particular reference to the requirements of renewal to reflect the expectations of adult students.

3.2.2 Gaining access to hitherto reserved fields of education

The movement described above as 'horizontal' is indicative of the need to consider the potential of all systems and activities in the context of adult education. The latest developments in telecommunications and the launching of satellites for distance education will predictably lead in the near future to promulgation of legislation aimed at harmonizing international co-operation in this field.

3.2.3 Education and the world of work

Within the third movement, characterized by its synergy between education and the world of work, three main tendencies can be seen:

(a) the continuing separation between education and work. Here educational facilities are used for purposes which are usually limited to providing training courses geared towards future employment or the retraining of laid off workers, with a view to assisting their re-insertion in a suitable sector of production;

(b) establishing reciprocal arrangements. Here measures to promote the right of workers to education are taken either at the level of the general education system or in the work place itself.

Within the education system it is at higher levels that specific new study opportunities are being created. In the work place, special 'educational units' are being introduced and on-the-job training courses organized. In Finland, the law on vocational training which came into force in the autumn of 1987 provides for 'Basic training in the form of on-the-job training'. In China, legislation passed in April 1988 stipulates that industrial firms should 'set up a contingent of work force composed of people with ideas, morality and education; and should strengthen ideological and political education, legal education, national defence education, scientific and cultural education and technical and professional training in order to improve the quality of the workers' (95, p.2).

(c) Changing attitudes to the educational value of work, or in other words the processes of informal education which the worker experiences in the course of his working life, are still only a prospective trend, but they have important consequences for progress towards the right to adult education. As it was not possible to conduct any extensive research in this field, we shall limit ourselves to an excerpt from the Labour Code of the GDR. 'The enterprise is bound to organize the working tasks in such a way that the workers can fully use and further develop their education and creative skills: to create, in the rationalization of work, prerequisites for an effective and personality-promoting activity'.

3.3 The abolition of time limitations

Establishing the right to education 'in all fields' and at all ages also calls for measures to overcome the constraints imposed by the time limits which characterize the operation of traditional systems and patterns of life based on alternating periods of rest, leisure and work, leaving little time for study.

Measures to this end can be classified according to whether they concern periods which may be used for educational purposes, the length of time devoted to study and the tempo of courses:

(a) the first category of measures is intended to guarantee the provision of educational opportunities at times of the day or year which are a practical proposition, especially for workers. This aspect of adult education affects all adults, but particularly seasonal workers and those who are not entitled to paid educational leave;

(b) the second category makes it possible to vary the length of training courses, taking account of the subjects chosen and the educational levels of participants or their possibilities of participation, rather than the needs of the employer. Recent legislation has tended to introduce measures which are more flexible than before. Depending on national preferences and possibilities, provision is made for courses varying considerably in length, from one day to three years or more;

(c) the third category recognizes the right for adults to continue their studies, based on schedules more suited to their circumstances. In the Netherlands, for instance, 'participants can study at their own tempo and take one subject at a time, receiving a certificate for each subject passed' (22, 8).

3.4 The organization of training courses

In some countries legislation also lays down specific measures for the organization of training courses for adults. The reference here is to recommendations concerning the organization of courses, either for groups or for individuals. Measures concerning the size of classes are used as a means of establishing the limit below which the State will not grant subsidies. These limits vary, according to the method of study (classes, study groups, correspondence courses etc.) and on the basis of the geographical area concerned, etc.

The promotion and funding of individual study has developed considerably in the course of the last fifty years. In the Soviet Union, provision is made in Article 14 (68) of the Fundamental Legislation. In Finland, new legislation

passed in 1987 establishes 'the option of individual study in all vocational schools'. It is the role of the school to decide whether an adult student would benefit from individual study. In China, facilities are provided by schools and trade unions. Students, either individually or in small informal groups, have access to counselling, vocational advisory services and libraries, which provide particularly valuable aid (77, pp.35-36).

4. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEM

4.1 Introduction

This section of the survey deals with the measures taken by national legislators to solve four problems common to all countries: the restructuring of the authorities responsible for adult education, possibilities of action at local government level, terms of reference for the promotion of associations, and financial management.

4.2 The process of restructuring national education authorities

The tendency to consider as part of adult education policy only the activities and initiatives coming under the ministry of education is now virtually obsolete. As Coombs points out, ministries of education play a relatively minor role in the field of adult education. In almost all countries a number of other ministries - agriculture, social security, health, labour and defence - are much more active (16, p. 32).

In the Netherlands the 1988 outline law remedied a situation in which authority had been shared by three ministries (culture, education and labour) and provided for the creation, under the aegis of the Prime Minister, of a Cabinet Committee with responsibility for establishing two-year programmes and managing funds comprising allocations which had formerly been administered separately by individual ministries. This Committee is composed of representatives of the above three ministries (95). The practice of entrusting responsibility for administering national policies to an interministerial Committee comprising representatives of all the different Ministries, in addition to officials from other departments, is followed in many countries. In some cases these committees also include representatives of non-governmental bodies.

4.3 Local administration

National legislation makes provision for management to be divided up at central, regional and local levels. However, many contradictory situations exist. Decentralization does not automatically lead to improvements in the promotion of adult education. Some ill-defined forms of decentralization include:

(a) virtual decentralization through the transfer of authority to local level, but without the necessary means of exercising it; or the granting to local authorities, under the pretext of respecting their autonomy, of responsibility for only peripheral tasks, such as providing appropriate premises;

(b) decentralization accompanied by the devolution of responsibilities, thereby freeing central governments from all responsibility but at the same time failing to provide the necessary support at local level in terms of either guidance or finance;

(c) decentralization on a geographical basis but not in terms of administration or programming.

The responsibilities devolved on local authorities as regards the direct administration of adult education activities are in a state of constant evolution. This situation is not confined to non-formal education or vocational training. In almost all North European countries, local authorities are fully responsible for the programming and administration of adult education courses, including those at higher levels (22, C3; 6).

4.4 The promotion of associations

Specific measures taken in this field may be classified according to the provision made for:

(a) Opportunities to develop recourse to associations or voluntary agencies. In many countries, when the need is felt to go beyond the limits of spontaneous or friendly groupings, an association is required to obtain official recognition. Sometimes this is considered to be a deterrent to the exercise of social activities and the procurement of public support.

The main categories of government action to promote the creation and functioning of such associations may be classified as follows:

1. the granting of funds for running costs and the conduct of activities;

2. the opening up of cultural facilities of all kinds for co-operation with these associations;

3. the provision of residential centres for the holding of adult education activities;

4. the creation of schools and specialized centres for non-formal education activities;

5. the availability of services and support for the training and specialization of adult education teachers.

(b) In view of the two main functions of these associations - expressing the demand for a service, and/or the organization of a response to specific educational needs - it is hardly surprising that public action in this field is an easy target for criticism. It is worth noting the controversy generated in India by the VIIth Five-Year Plan, which provides in Sections 2.114 and 2.123, entitled, 'Involvement of Voluntary Agencies', for the introduction of new regulations and procedures, including the establishment of a National Council for Voluntary Associations in rural areas.

This proposal was immediately interpreted as an attempt at interference by the State designed to impose greater control and constraints on private organizations and their teams (87, p. 35).

(c) the administration of adult education activities or services by voluntary agencies cannot be seen as the ideal solution. To avoid the risks of institutionalizing voluntary associations or of bureaucratizing their services measures have been introduced to promote innovations, through such agencies, in areas varying from public services to social administration. An example is provided

by the situation in Sweden, where 'the unions have (...) a majority in the adult education councils which administer support for adult education as well as being represented on most of the boards and similar bodies within the area of adult education' (22, 10).

For examples of social administration by individual bodies the reader is referred to the origins of adult education, and in particular to the system of administration used by the Mechanics' Institutes in the United Kingdom, or the public libraries which, as L.R. McColvin points out, were all supported and administered by their own subscribers (49, pp. 12-13).

4.5 The administration of financial resources

4.5.1 Sources of finance

The main sources of finance for adult education are the government, local boards, firms, voluntary agencies and the public.

Central government provides funds for adult education in the form of budgetary allocations. In such cases funds are derived from special taxes. In order to raise or increase the necessary funds, some countries have introduced systems of indirect taxation.

In the United Kingdom similar measures were already in force early this century, with the imposition of a special tax on the consumption of alcohol. In 1959, in Haiti, a law passed on 11 August introduced 'literacy postage stamps' (93, p. 22). In Brazil, MOBRAL receives funds from the Federal Soccer Pool (74, p. 29). In Greece, a proportion of the funds allocated to the departmental Commissions comes from levies on lotteries, festivals and theatrical performances, as laid down by Decree 3094/54, Article 7.

For local authorities, the main sources of finance are budgetary allocations received from central government, specially imposed taxes, and forms of indirect taxation, as noted in the reference above to Greece. In Switzerland and the United Kingdom respectively, the Cantons and local education authorities are authorized to levy taxes. The complete decentralization of the process of revenue collection is specially disadvantageous in the case of impoverished areas, where lower tax revenue is available or other priorities may have to come first.

In a number of countries firms are the main source of finance for adult education. In countries such as France and Sweden, according to the information available, firms guarantee a financial contribution in excess of 50 per cent of the global budget - both public and private - for adult education (95). Specific legislation is in force which requires firms to allocate a quota for educational purposes, usually proportionate to the total payroll and equivalent to between 1 and 1.5 per cent thereof. In the socialist countries a contribution from firms' profits is required by law. As a rule, adult education costs are tax-deductible.

The self-financing capacity of voluntary associations is explicitly provided for in several instances, often with a view to reducing costs to be changed to public financing.

Public finance is not restricted to the payment of registration fees. Other costs include travel expenses, board and lodging, equipment, and loss of earnings. In several instances, legislation requires that these expenses be covered by public funds.

4.5.2 The use of funds

The main criteria for the allocation of public funds in the legislation under consideration take account of the following factors: the educational problems of the population as a whole, the level of demand, the subjects given most priority by national and local policies, and the cultural products to be promoted.

Reference to adult education indicators to define the criteria applied to the distribution of expenditure is to be found in legislation which regulates the allocation of government funds to regional and local authorities. In Indonesia, for example, allocations are based on the degree of illiteracy and the drop-out rate in the areas concerned. In the United States of America, where most legislation in this field is based on similar criteria, the formula introduced by the Job Training Partnership Act is the following:

> 'one-third of the funds on the basis of substantial unemployment (at least 6.5 per cent), one-third on excess unemployment (excess of 4.5 per cent), and one-third on the number of economically disadvantaged persons in the State' (103, p. 1).

A second criterion, in contrast to the above, is based on simple reference to existing demand. Public funds are directed towards those individuals who are in a position to express their interest in education and study options. In such cases the rules of the free market come into play.

A third criterion favours the allocation of all public funding on the basis of the subjects studied or the subsystem concerned. Normally, public funding covers all expenditure on basic adult education and vocational training. In some instances, funding also covers individual training costs by means of study grants and special allowances.

A fourth criterion, or approach, is to keep down the costs of some cultural products, such as printed matter, theatre tickets, etc. This is implemented by greater emphasis on support policies. However, if taken in isolation, such measures encourage cultural consumption only by the public which is traditionally interested in reading, theatre-going, etc.

A fifth approach is to promote the growth of voluntary associations. To this effect, legislation provides for the possibility of financing either the association as such or the activities proposed. In Scotland, legislation passed in 1980 makes provision for the funding of non profit-making bodies to cover administrative costs and the purchase of land (22, p. 12). In France, associations are eligible for grants to assist with initial outlay incurred in setting up the association and the remuneration of their personnel (7, p. 66). At best, grants made to associations for educational purposes cover expenses relating to the remuneration of teachers and administrative staff, the purchase of teaching materials and the cost of premises.

5. ADULT EDUCATION TEACHERS AND RESEARCH

5.1 The status and role of adult education teachers

The recommendation approved by the Unesco Conference held in Paris (1985) emphasized the need to train adult education personnel capable of working in all areas with students who are adults (94, p. 59). This is highly significant, since it takes an 'androgogical' approach to the role and mission of all those employed in education activities addressed to adults, and rejects any compartmentalized or biased view of this type of education.

In relation to these guidelines legislative developments have been both expansive and restrictive, in what could be described as a process of identifying and recognizing the different categories of adult education teachers.

One of these restrictive tendencies is to limit legislative provisions to full-time workers, preferably those employed by public authorities and engaged in planning or administration, rather than training.

Another limiting factor is the lack of any recognized status for voluntary workers. This is reflected in different ways, such as the delegation of all matters of concern to them to private individuals, i.e. a move towards the gradual scaling-down of the voluntary sector. Despite a variety of limiting factors, the current trend is to consider the whole range of educational and cultural workers in the light of the specific nature of their employment and the interconnection between the various functions performed.

The question of adult education workers poses other problems more directly concerned with methods of recruitment, job security, remuneration and rotating duties. Legislation does not always provide explicit answers. With regard to methods of recruitment, it is significant that in many countries, including those with a less developed tradition in the field of adult education, such as Venezuela and Greece, applicants are now required to have received special training in the education of adults. In some cases, legislation has introduced compulsory requirements. In New Zealand, all full-time educators are required to have completed at least one year of training in adult education. In Switzerland, Sweden and Finland, all applicants for teaching posts in the formal education of adults must have obtained the necessary qualifications. Nevertheless, the lack of facilities for the training of teachers specialized in adult education frequently compels legislators to relax their requirements and accept the recruitment of teachers whose qualifications are limited to the subjects taught (i.e. teachers without 'androgogical' training).

Job security is dealt with in different ways. In New Zealand, and in the GDR, legislation makes provision for the possibility of employing teachers on long-term contracts. In the GDR, this option is also open to part-time teachers. In other countries, and for most categories of teachers in adult education, employment contracts are valid for one year. Staff are engaged as required and with reference to parameters based on volume of work, number of participants and availability of facilities and centres in operation.

5.2 Solutions to the problems of training adult educators

The tendency to seek a legal solution to the problems of training adult educators is gaining ground in an increasingly large number of countries. The main issues dealt with by legislation concern:

(a) the adult educator's right to receive training. In some countries this right is recognized, but only on a limited basis and in the case of specific categories of teachers. This right is usually extended on a broader basis to high-ranking civil servants, in full employment and engaged in administrative duties. Moves are now under way to improve this situation. In Portugal, the basic law on the education system, passed in 1986, recognizes 'the right to continuing education for all educators' (Article 35.1). In other countries, all educators are guaranteed the possibility of initial training. In Yugoslavia, for example, training in adult education is available to, and required of, all those who intend to teach adults. Teachers who have specialized in other subjects

(history, medicine, mathematics, the cinema, etc.) are required to obtain a minimum degree of basic training, passing at least four compulsory examinations (22.7). In the GDR legislation is even more explicit. The 1972 law stipulates that 'instructors and educators in the field of vocational training have the duty to continue systematically their education' (Article 40.3). 'Engineers (...) and other specialists can qualify as instructors for vocational training by means of an extra course of studies in education' (Article 40.2). The above law also deals with part-time teachers and lays down that they 'shall be enabled to give instruction characterized by good method and education effectiveness by means of further education in the field of pedagogics' (Article 40.5);

(b) the requirements for initial training, specialization and retraining. While in the case of retraining programmes, levels are usually determined by the problems involved in training particular categories of adult educators, in initial training and specialization programmes the trend is to relate measures to the levels corresponding to the different grades of higher education. The aim is to give universities an increasingly important role in initial training and specialization. The lack of legal regulations governing the ways in which universities should operate in the field of initial training and specialization represents a serious omission, due, most probably, to the almost insuperable barriers which isolate universities from the problems of adult education.

5.3 Research

Legislation to develop research in specific fields of the theory, history and methodology of adult education can be classified according to three main concerns: to guarantee adult education access to resources intended for scientific research, and, most importantly, to the resources of the university; to ensure the increased socialization of adult education and its organic growth by the promotion of the right to adult education; and to implement the necessary training programmes and co-ordinate research at national level.

(a) The legal requirement for universities to participate in the development of research in adult education exists in only a few countries. In most cases, legislation takes no account of the specific role of universities nor of their obligations in this field. Existing measures are limited to the creation of professorships in adult education studies or, at best, adult education departments.

(b) Faced with the difficulty of funding immediate solutions to the requirements of scientific development and the increasingly close link between research and adult education, many countries have begun to extend the right to carry out research to organizations themselves, to groups of educators involved in experimental projects and to local authorities.

(c) The requirement to implement programmes and to co-ordinate research is often met by the creation of appropriate national bodies, directly responsible to a ministry, but also comprising other kinds of bodies both public and private. The role of these bodies varies greatly. An example is the research institute established in Denmark in 1983, which offers consultancy services for all those involved in education, provides information and documentation, collaborates with national projects and assists in the preparation of new legislation (92, p. 58). In Sudan, there is

a different approach, where the 1982 Literacy and Adult Education Act introduced the requirement to update a 'Census of the Illiterate' on a regular basis (Sec. 6); this calls for the co-operation of bodies of all kinds.

CONCLUSIONS

There is now a tendency for a growing number of countries to enact laws concerning adult education. While at one time and in some countries these provisions reflected State welfare policies and strategies, today adult education is required by law to accompany, and even precede, major economic and social changes. The achievement of such objectives is seen to depend on two basic hypotheses which are in the process of becoming a reality. The first is the recognition of the right for all individuals, and in particular all workers, to devote part of each day to study. The second is the creation of an adult education system which guarantees the exercise of the right to education for all, at any age, from the lowest to the highest levels.

All those involved in the field of adult education are making their own contribution, with the preparation of legislation and the development of highly significant experiments. For instance, the project carried out in Denmark is of particular interest, since it involved the participation of the whole country in a research project to assist in the drafting of new legislation. More than 400 groups of workers and members of the public took part in the evaluation of existing legislation and the presentation of proposed reforms.

At the international level, it is important that, in addition to advanced research, attention should also be paid to raising the educational level of the population as a whole, and that there be greater commitment on the part of individual governments in this direction. The growing influx of immigrants underlines a situation of increasing interdependence, which also extends to the field of education. Unequal improvements in education are likely to perpetuate situations of inequality and conflict.

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